

A
S E R M O N

Preached at the
Anniversary Meeting
OF THE
Sons of Clergy-men,
In the Church of *S. Mary le Bow,*
On Thursday, *Decemb. 2. 1686.*

Printed at the Desire of the Right Worshipful
The Stewards of the Feast,
To whom it is Humbly Presented.

By *HENRY DOVE, D.D.*
One of his Majesties Chaplains in Ordinary.

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Jo. Battely.

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St. Paul's Church-yard. 1 6 8 7.

Anniversary Meeting

Sons of Liberty

of the State of New York

to be held at the City of New York

on the 1st day of January 1800

at the City of New York

at the City of New York

at the City of New York

at the City of New York

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Gen. Ep. of St. *Jude*, v. 3.

-----*That ye should earnestly contend for the Faith which was once delivered to the Saints.*

IF it was needful for the Apostles to write unto the Churches, and to exhort them to stedfastness and perseverance in the Faith, while the Gospel was yet fresh in their memories ; it is certainly more necessary for us who live at this distance, if we expect the same *common Salvation*, to be instant, and to urge the like Exhortations, by how much the reason of their diligence and zeal is far more prevalent in our times.

For unless the Complaints of all sober men be groundless, unless the publick Voice, and our own Experience deceive us, the sundry Prophecies of the last days are fulfilled in ours ; and the Mischiefs that did but creep in the beginning of Christianity, gather strength and multiply among us, upon whom the Ends of the World are come. Should I read unto you this whole Epistle of St. *Jude*, or the greatest part of the second of St. *Peter*, which in most

things agrees with this, your own Observation would presently suit each Character ; you would point out the Persons to whom they belonged, and think it not improbable, that when the Spirit of God did inspire these holy men, he might do it with an eye to the present Age.

But being I come not hither to censure others, but to confirm our selves in the true Faith, and being Error falls and disappears of it self, when the Truth is set in a clear light, I shall wave those black descriptions both of the Persons and their Doctrines, which the Apostle has here exposed before us, and shall onely use them as so many Arguments of our care and caution, that if we meet with the men, (as 'tis hard to avoid them) we may notwithstanding shun their Errours ; that while we complain of Divisions on one hand, and Corruptions on another, of Ignorance in some, Irreligion in others, and Carelessness in most, we may be sure not to contribute to the increase of either ; but that we labour for knowledge and a good Conscience, the loss of which is enough of it self to endanger our Faith, though there were none without us to oppose it ; and then that we study to be quiet, and as much as lieth in us, and if it be possible, follow

low peace with all men : for these (we know) are infallible Evidences of a Gospel-temper, and inseparable Concomitants of a meek and sincere Christian.

Or if it be not possible for us to compass peace with all, seeing all men have not Faith, all men are not sincere, let not that discourage, but rather whet our diligence in doing our own undoubted duty : Though it exceed our power and skill to make all men of one mind, and we cannot of our selves attain unto it, yet since we are sure of the mind of Christ and his Apostles, let us always remember what he revealed, and what they preached, believing the Truth as it is in Jesus, continuing in the Truth as 'tis after Godliness, living peaceably, charitably, and unblameably our selves, and praying continually both for our selves and others, and thus *earnestly contend for the Faith which was once delivered to the Saints.*

The words are a plain, but pathetical Exhortation to an indispensable and weighty Duty, incumbent on every man that hath given up his Name to Christ, that professes the true Apostolick Faith, and hopes to be saved in that Profession. And surely (my Brethren) if this be required of every Christian, it will highly become us that are here assembled, when we
reflect

reflect on the relation wherein we stand, not meerly as Professours, but some as *Fathers*, many as *Dispensers*, and all as *Sons* in the common Faith, to be very earnest and zealous for it ; that so we may at once credit our Extraction, and adorn the Gospel of God our Saviour ; that we may walk worthy of that good Providence which attended us in our Birth, and blessed us in our Baptism, and manifest the efficacy of that primitive and sound Doctrine which both our *Fathers* and our *Church* have taught us.

That therefore I may recommend the Duty to your practice, I shall observe what is proper for our instruction in the words, and handle them in a method that may fairly conduce to each : In order to which, I shall endeavour,

- I. To explain the meaning of this word *πίστις*, or *Faith*.
- II. To consider the manner of its conveyance, and the Persons that received it, *ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ ἀποστόλου, delivered to the Saints*.
- III. To observe the emphasis or force of the participle *ἡνέκεν*, *The Faith was delivered to the Saints, and that but once*.
- IV. To conclude all with the earnest Exhortation of St. *Jude*, that upon these
and

and some other motives I shall offer, we may be effectually perswaded, *μαρτυριάζοντας*, to contend earnestly for it ; i. e. to defend it with our utmost vigour, to strive together that we lose it not ; not with the fury of a blind misguided Zeal, which produceth Confusion and every evil Work ; but with the Spirit of power, and of love, and of a sound mind, and with meekness of wisdom, as becometh Saints.

I. I need not stay to tell you, that this word *πίστις*, or *Faith*, hath as many, and perhaps more significations than any single word in the whole Scriptures, which are obvious and easie to every careful Reader : I shall onely explain the sence of it in this place, as 'tis drawn from the nature of Faith. Divine Faith in general is nothing else but an assent to the Truths of God, upon his own Word and Testimony ; let it appear that God hath declared it, and there needs no other ground of our Belief : And the Faith of a Christian is an assent to the same truths, and upon the same grounds ; but as the Church of Christ now stands, and must continue to the end of the World, it admits of this addition, as they are delivered unto us in the Writings of the Apostles and Prophets. In
which.

which you may easily distinguish two things ; the assent of the Understanding, and something credible ; the act of Believing, and the object of Faith. Now although the Faith in the Text doth not exclude, but rather suppose the former, for how should we contend for that which we do not believe? yet it principally denotes the latter, *i. e.* the word of Faith, the Doctrine that brings Salvation, the undoubted Principles of our holy Religion, contained at large in the Gospel, and sum'd up in the Apostolical and Primitive Confessions. And this is evident, 1. from the following word in the Text, *delivered*, the Faith *delivered* ; for as for the Act or Habit of Faith, it is either produced by the ordinary means of hearing, or else supernaturally infus'd by the Spirit of God : but that which is properly delivered, is the Doctrine it self, either by word of mouth or by writing. And 2. from many parallel places of Scripture, as *Acts* 13. 8. ' Where *Elymas* the Sorcerer sought to turn away the Deputy from the Faith, who is afterwards said, *v.* 12. to be astonished at the Doctrine of the Lord : and *Acts* 14. 22. ' When *St. Paul* and *Barnabas* had preached the Gospel to several Cities, they confirmed the Souls of the Disciples, and exhorted them to continue in the Faith : nay,

St.

St. Paul tells us of himself, *Gal. 1. 23.* ' That he
' preached the Faith which once he destroyed ;
' and prophecies also of others, That in the lat-
' ter times some shall depart from the Faith,
1 Tim. 4. 1. By all which, we are to understand
the Doctrine of Faith ; that Faith which God
revealed by his Son, which Christ made known
to his Apostles, and the Apostles preached to
the World ; at the promulgation of which,
the Angels rejoyced, and the Devils trembled,
to see Man so wonderfully redeemed, and
themselves irrecoverably left in everlasting
chains ; which was propagated by Signes and
Wonders, and so demonstrated by Miracles,
that men were easily induced to believe the
Word of God in their mouths, while they saw
the Power of God in every Apostles hand ; by
the energy of which the Cripples were cured,
the Dead were raised, and some at first were
deprived of life : That Faith which all the
Prophets foretold, which the Evangelists pen'd,
and the Church receiv'd : That Faith which in
one day by the first *Pentecost-Sermon*, conver- *Acts 2. 41*
ted about 3000 Souls, and hath crowned ma-
ny Millions in succeeding Ages, with eternal
Glory : In a word, That Faith which hath sa-
ved all the Saints that are already in Heaven,
and must bring all the rest that are ordained

to come thither. Which leads me in the next place,

H. To consider *the manner of its conveyance, and the persons that received it, The Faith delivered to the Saints*: I put these two together, because they will help to explain each other. And here if we would take in the whole we contend for, we must go back to the beginning, not onely to *the Book of the Generation of Jesus Christ*, but even to the *Epoche of time it self*, and may trace it down briefly in this succeeding course: When God had created man for his own service, that is, his glory, he was pleased to reveal his will to him, because what was hid from him could never be the instance of his duty; and hence to the Law of Nature which he printed on his mind, he added a positive command to try the integrity of his obedience: and this was the first Revelation made to *Adam* in innocence, whereby he was enjoin'd to believe and to obey his Maker. But alas! we all know what *Adam* did, and feel the sad effects of his transgression unto this day: 'wherefore in the succeeding Ages he spake unto the 'Fathers at sundry times, and in divers manners, *Heb. 1.* sometimes by an audible Voice, and sometimes by secret Illapses, by Dreams and by Visions, by the Ministry of Men, and by the
Message

Message of Angels: And when the fulness of time was come, he spake unto us once for all, by *his onely begotten Son*; who being from all eternity in the bosom of the Father, was able to know; and undertaking this errand of his infinite compassion, and his own accord, was willing to impart whatever was necessary for us to receive: In order to which, he took our Nature upon him, conversed among us, unfolding the Mystery which was before kept secret, and so became *the Author of this Faith*. And as his Mercy was great in his Advent, so he shew'd his Wisdom in the choice of the Persons to whom he delivered this Will; for he did not propound it at all adventures, and expose it to the uncertain Multitude, or commit it to the hands of the prejudiced Rabbies, not unto the Rich and Noble, or the Wise and Learned of the Age; but unto a selected company of illiterate *Galileans*, twelve men of mean quality, and from an obscure corner, without the advantages of Birth or Breeding, that by the weakness of the Instruments, and the improbability of the means, the Power of God might appear stronger. These were they, despised indeed by men, but highly favoured of God, and chosen by Christ to be Witnesses of all that he began both to do, and teach, and suf-

fer : Who being always *à latere* to their Lord and Master, and enjoying the access of Favou-rites, and the freedom of Friends, had the evidence of their outward Senses to confirm the inward perswasion of their Minds, whereby they were as infallibly assured that he knew all things, and that he came forth from God, as that they heard him speak, or saw him work a Miracle : And thus St. *John* the familiar Disciple testifieth of himself and the rest of the Apostles, 1 *Ep.* 1. 1. 'That which was from the
'beginning, which we have heard, which we
'have seen with our eyes, which we have look-
'ed upon, and our hands have handled of the
'word of life ; that which we have seen and
'heard declare we unto you.

Act. 1. 22.

And as they were Witnesses of all his Divine Speeches, and mighty Works, and bitter Sufferings, and above all, of his glorious Resurrection from the dead, even of all that had passed from the Baptism of *John*, until the day of his Assumption ; so after his Ascension, he confirmed their Minds, and increased their Faith, and emboldened their Faces, by the punctual performance of the Promise he made them on Earth in sending the Spirit from Heaven : That good Spirit that enlightened their Understandings, furnished their Memories, and guided

guided them into all Truth ; that inspired them with the gift of Tongues and of Prophecy, endued them with a power of working Miracles also, in some respects greater than those he had wrought himself, and brought all things fresh to their remembrance whatsoever they had seen or heard before, or were now to publish. By which they were fully instructed and animated, and perfectly enabled to discharge their trust, maugre all the opposition that malice, or rage, or wit, or power could make against them ; for by one short Sermon (as I said) which you read in the second of the *Acts*, they augmented the former number of 120 with the addition of about 3000 Souls, and by the next, (recorded in the third) of 'near 5000 more: so mightily grew the Word *Act. 4. 4.* 'of God, and prevailed, and Believers were the 'more added to the Lord, multitudes both of 'men and women, *Act. 5. 14.*

These were the Persons to whom the Faith was at first delivered, and these the means of its first conveyance : That which Christ received of his Father, he delivered unto the Apostles ; that which the Apostles received of Christ, they delivered to the Saints, who were called so to be, being converted by their preaching : And thus the Faith was planted, and the

the Church of Christ was founded. That Primitive, Holy, and Uniform Church which began at *Jerusalem*, and was the Mother of all true Churches in after Ages ; which consisted of a company of faithful, and obedient, and devout People, professing the same Doctrine, communicating in the same Sacraments, and presenting the same Prayers : As ye find them describ'd, *Act. 2. 41, 42.* ' Then they that gladly received his word, were baptized, and the same day there were added unto them about 3000 Souls ; and they continued stedfastly in the Apostles Doctrine and Fellowship, and in breaking of Bread, and in Prayers. I beseech you, consult the place, and ponder the words well, because they contain all the necessary Notes, and essential Ingredients of a true Church : They were *all baptized*, there's the entrance by Baptism ; they stedfastly retained the *Apostles Doctrine*, there's the unity of the Faith ; they continued in the *Apostles Fellowship*, there's their union and adherence to their Governours ; they received the blessed Eucharist, expressed by *breaking of bread*, and consented in the use of the common *Prayers*, there's the Uniformity of their Worship. These were the Saints of the first Church, built upon the Faith which the Apostles then preached,

ched, made capable of a continual increase, and an uninterrupted succession: 'for the Lord 'added daily then such as should be saved, and Acts 2. 47. hath ever since added more, and will still persevere to adde, even unto the end of the World, till he shall have compleated the number of his Elect, 'and presented unto himself a 'glorious Church, without spot or wrinkle, in Eph. 5. 27. 'Heaven. So much for *the manner of its first conveyance,* and *the Persons that first received it.*

But here ariseth a material question that concerns all the succeeding Ages, and is of great moment to us now living; for that the Faith was at first revealed by Christ, and published by his Apostles, is confessed by all Christians, however they be otherwise divided in their opinions or judgments: but where this Faith is now to be found, and how it is derived downwards unto us, who live at the distance of 1600 years and upwards, is a controversie that at this very hour disturbs Christendom.

That 'tis preserved in the Scriptures as a perfect Rule of Gods revealed Will, is the Doctrine of ours, and all reformed Churches: That the Scriptures are not a sufficient Rule of Faith, but want a supply from Tradition, is the known Doctrine of the Church of Rome. By the meer mention of which, you cannot but

but see the necessity of a Resolution, for settling our Judgments, for guiding our Consciences, and building us up in our most holy Faith: In order to which, I crave leave to premise some few preliminaries, that may at once give us light, and prevent cavils in this Enquiry.

Mat. 28. 19.
Mark 16. 15.

1. It is confessed, that as our Saviour writ nothing himself, so the commission he gave his Apostles was not to write, but to teach and preach.

2 Thess. 2. 2.
& 5.
1 Cor. 11. 2.

2. But then it is no less certain, that the Apostles taught the Churches by writing, as well as by preaching; and that the Faith was propagated by both, by preaching to the Saints present, by writing to those absent.

3. Whatever the Apostles delivered by word of mouth, or committed to writing, is of equal authority, because in both they were inspired by the Holy Ghost: If therefore it appear, that what is delivered, be the Word and Will of God, whether it be written or unwritten, 'tis sufficient ground of a Christians Faith.

4. But then fourthly, since it is impossible to make it appear, that after the Scriptures were written, and the Canon was compleat, there remained some Articles of Faith preserved

ved onely by Tradition, and not delivered in the Scriptures, it will naturally follow, that the written Word of God is a sufficient Rule of divine Faith.

I confess at the first, when Christianity was confin'd to a narrow compass, and the number of Believers was but small, their zeal and concern for the Faith was such, that there was no danger of letting any thing slip which they had received as a necessary Doctrine; and then *Oral Tradition* was a proper conveyance of the divine Will, especially considering that then the gifts of the Spirit were plentifully shed, not onely on the Apostles, but on every true Believer also: But when the Word of God grew and multiplied, and the Religion of Jesus gained ground in the World, when it spread it self far and near, and passed through many hands into divers remote Countries, the same Spirit that moved the Apostles to teach and preach, moved some of them to write what they had preached, and other holy men to write what they had seen and heard, lest in process of time their Doctrine might be forgotten by the carelesness of luke-warm Professours, or corrupted by the contrivance of crafty Hereticks, or destroyed by the malice of the Devil.

And truly, though the Writings of any one

C

Apostle

Apostle appointed for this purpose had been sufficient to preserve the Faith entire, particularly had we onely the Gospel of St. *John*, affirming of himself, that though he had omitted many things that Jesus did, yet he had written all things necessary to salvation, *Joh. 20. 30, 31.* 'And many other signes truly did Jesus in the presence of his Disciples, which are not written in this Book : *But these are written, why ? that ye might believe ; written that ye might believe what ? that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God ; and what of that ? and that believing,* (this, as the great foundation of all the rest, which the belief of this is apt to produce in your hearts and lives) *ye might have life through his Name.* I say, though the Testimony of one in this manner had been sufficient, yet such is the Providence of God, and his abundant care of his Church, which must continue to the end of the World, that he ratifies his Will by a joynt testimony, and consignes the Rule of our Faith by the hands of several Witnesses, differing perhaps in stile and method, and other circumstances, but agreeing in the substance of all things necessary, as the water is the same, though it be conveyed through sundry pipes and channels.

From what hath been premised, we may
thus

thus argue : If to preserve a thing from oblivion or corruption, be the main end of writing it, then all that is necessary to salvation was also written, because 'tis most requisite to preserve what is most necessary. Or if you please, thus : If it was necessary for the Apostles to write at all, lest what they had delivered might be lost, it was requisite they should write all that was necessary, lest the designe of the whole might be frustrated. For when God of his infinite goodness had revealed his Will for the salvation of man, and in his own due time inspired those holy men that writ it, had they with-held or suppressed any part of it, the drift of the whole had been rendered ineffectual, our Faith had been lame, and the means of our salvation imperfect : Which can never consist with the integrity of such as are supposed to write by inspiration, nor with the goodness of God that inspired them in order to the salvation of mankind.

But if this general Argument be less perswasive, give me leave to enforce it with a matter of fact, which admits of no exception. And here, for the Authority of the Old Testament, we have the references and quotations of our Saviour and his Apostles, for the perfection of the New, the concurrent testimony of the

Antients.; and for the sufficiency of both, the constant appeals of the Church of God.

1. It is manifest, that though our Saviour sometimes proved the truth of his Doctrine by Miracles and mighty Works, yet generally he appeal'd to the Scriptures as to the principal test of the greatest truths: for thus he confuted the Sadducees in that fundamental Article of the Resurrection, *Mat. 22. 29.* 'Ye
'do err, not knowing the Scriptures. To them he referred the Jews when he prov'd himself the Messias, *Job. 5. 39.* 'Search the
'Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they that testifie of
'me. By them he confirmed his Disciples, when he was risen from the dead: for, 'beginning at *Moses* and all the Prophets, he
'expounded unto them in all the Scriptures, 'the things concerning himself, *Luke 24. 27.*
And hence *St. Peter* seems to prefer the Prophecies of old time, before an immediate 'voice
'from Heaven; for though we heard the voice 'in the holy Mount, *2 Pet. 1. 18.* yet he presently adds, we have also a more sure word
'of Propheſie, whereunto ye do well that ye 'take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a
'dark place. Thus *St. Paul* commends *Timothy*, that from a child he had known the ho-
'ly

‘ly Scriptures, which were able to make him
‘wise unto salvation, through Faith which is
‘in Christ Jesus, 2 *Tim.* 3. 15. And to name
no more, ‘The *Bereans* are said to be more
‘noble than they of *Thessalonica*, because they
‘searched the Scriptures daily, whether these
‘things were so, *Acts* 17. 11.

But you’ll say, the testimonies hitherto produced, concern onely the Old Testament; what’s all this to the New, which was not written while our Saviour was on Earth, but after the descent of the Holy Ghost, and that at some distance of time, and by degrees, as the Spirit moved the Apostles and other holy men to write? For the perfection therefore and sufficiency of the New we have the practice of the Church in the purest times, and the unanimous consent of the Fathers who appealed to the Scriptures in all their questions that concerned Faith or Manners, and confuted all Heresies by them. An Argument, I confess, from humane testimony, but yet of undoubted authority, such as no prudent man has reason to distrust, and such as the matter is capable of. I know they did sometimes alledge Traditions, especially when they disputed with those that denied the Scriptures; but this does not at all infer the insufficiency of the Scriptures, because
the

the Traditions they urged, were of such things as were set down in the Scriptures. Nay, they did rather hereby confirm their authority, by shewing the great agreement there was between such as were true Traditions, and the holy Scriptures : For it ought to be remembered, that the Fathers were to encounter two sort of Adversaries ; some few that denied the Scriptures, and others that received them : Where the Scriptures were denied, they alledg'd onely Traditions ; where the Scriptures were allowed, they alledg'd the Scriptures in the first place, and Traditions for the true sense and interpretation of the Scriptures. But it does not appear that they ever did alledge Traditions for any one Article of Faith which is not plainly expressed in the Scriptures.

I shall not here detain you with a cloud of Quotations which are collected to my hands by a great many learned Pens, but onely with a few that are plain and positive : for I think I may safely affirm, that if there be one Tradition which runs through the Writings of the Antients as a common Principle , it is this ; That the Scriptures contain the perfect Rule of Faith.

Irenæus.

Irenæus. 'The Scriptures are perfect, for
' they are the Word of God, and were dicta-
' red by the Spirit of God. *Again,* We have
' known the method of our salvation by no o-
' ther but those that brought us the Gospel,
' which at first indeed they preach'd, but af-
' terwards by the Will of God they delivered
' it unto us in the Scriptures, to be the Foun-
' dation and Pillar of our Faith in time to
' come.

Lib. 1. cap. 47.
Lib 3. cap. 1.

Clem. Alexandr. 'They that look for the
' truth, must non desist till they have found it
' in the holy Scriptures: for the Writings of
' the Apostles and Prophets are the onely cer-
' tain principle of the Christian Doctrine, the
' onely demonstration in matter of Faith.

Strom. 7. vid.
three pages
near the end.

Origen. 'For the confirmation of all our
' words which we deliver as Doctrine, we
' must produce the fence of the Scriptures:
' for as no gold was sanctified without the
' Temple, so no Opinion without the Scri-
' ptures is holy.

ἀποδείξει.

Hom. 25. in
S. Mat.

Athanasius. 'If ye are the Disciples of the
' Gospel, speak not wickedly against God, but
' walk by the Scriptures: for if ye discourse
' without them, why do ye contend with us,
' who dare not speak nor hear what is foreign
' to them?

De Incarnat.
Christi.

Chrysost.

Hom. in Pf. 95.

Chrysost. ' If we speak without the warrant
' of Scripture, the thoughts of our hearers are
' uncertain ; now they assent , anon they
' doubt, sometimes they reject our discourse
' as frivolous, at the best they receive it onely
' as probable ; but when we produce the te-
' stimony of the voice of God from the Scri-
' pture, it gives authority to the speech of the
' Preacher, and confirms the mind of the
' Hearer.

And to the same effect speak *St. Basil, St. Cyril Hieros. Damascen, Theophylact, Theoph. Alexandr.* and sundry other of the Greeks.

Give me leave to subjoyn some few of the
Latins, that by two sorts of Witnesses we
may learn the Truth, and silence Gain-say-
ers.

Adv. Hermog.

C. 22.

De Præscr.

adv. Hæret.

Tertullian. ' The Gospel of Christ puts an end
' to all our curiosity and enquiry; when once we
' believe that, we expect nothing further : for
' this we believe first, that we are to believe
' nothing further. *Again,* I adore the fulness
' of the Scriptures. Let *Hermogenes* shew
' that 'tis written ; if not, let him expect the
' woe denounced against them that add or de-
' tract any thing.

Ep. 74. ad
Pompeium.

St. Cyprian. ' If it be commanded in the
' Gospel, or contained in the Epistles or Acts
of

‘ of the Apostles, then let us observe it as a
 ‘ divine and holy Tradition. And elsewhere
 ‘ having reckoned up the Canonical Books,
 ‘ These are they (says he) that make up the
 ‘ Rule from whence we draw all the assertions
 ‘ of our Faith.

Hieronymus. ‘ The Church of Christ pos- In Mich. c. 12.
 ‘ sesses Assemblies in all the World, being
 ‘ joyn’d by the Unity of the Spirit; and
 ‘ hath Cities founded on the Law and the
 ‘ Prophets, the Gospel and the Apostles. She
 ‘ departs not out of her own bounds, that is,
 ‘ from the Scriptures, but retains her first pos-
 ‘ session.

The time will not permit me to quote e-
 very Father, nor all of each; I shall onely
 adde the words of St. *Augustine* disputing with
Maximinus, and those of *Optatus* against the
 Donatists, because they are near akin, and
 highly useful to put an end to this and all o-
 ther Controversies. ‘ Neither ought I to al- S. Aug. contra
Maximian. l. 3j
c. 14.
 ‘ ledge now the Council of Nice, nor thou
 ‘ that of *Ariminum*, as prejudging the questi-
 ‘ on on either side; for neither am I bound
 ‘ to the authority of the one, nor thou of the
 ‘ other: let us both contest with authorities
 ‘ of Scriptures, which are Witnesses common

D

‘ to

Optat. l. 4. con-
tra Parmen.

‘to us both. *Optat.* You say ’tis lawful, we
‘say ’tis not ; and between both, the people
‘are in suspense : let them not believe ei-
‘ther, for perhaps we are both contentious ;
‘but let us be tryed by Judges : If they be
‘Christians, both sides will not afford such,
‘(*viz.* such as are impartial ;) if they be
‘Heathens, they are altogether ignorant ; if
‘they be Jews, they are utter Enemies. See-
‘ing therefore we can find no competent
‘Judges on Earth, we must have recourse to
‘Heaven : But alas ! what can we expect
‘from Heaven, while we have the last Will
‘and Testament of our Saviour in the Go-
‘spel ?

He compares the Scriptures to the Will of
a Testatour : if any Controversie arise among
the Kindred after his death, and one affirms
this, another that ; they don’t run to his
Grave, but peruse the Writings, and so learn
his mind as though he were still among them.
Our Saviour therefore, who is now in Hea-
ven, foreseeing strifes after his death, hath
left us his Will in the *lasting Tables* of the
Gospel : And surely these are sufficient to
teach us his mind, these alone must decide
all our differences that concern Faith or Man-
ners.

From

From hence alone we derive whatever we believe with our hearts, or confess with our mouths, as of necessity to salvation, because by these we shall be judged at the last day : ‘ For God (says *St. Paul*) shall judge the ‘ secrets of men by Jesus Christ according ‘ to my Gospel, *Rom. 2. 16.* These things we teach and exhort, as the sure ground of our Faith and Practice, and venture our Souls upon them : ‘ And if any man teach otherwise, (for I doubt not to apply the words ‘ of *St. Paul* again, *1 Tim. 6. 3. &c.*) and ‘ consent not to wholesome words, even the ‘ words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the ‘ Doctrine which is according to Godliness; he is *proud*, he *knows nothing*, he *boasts* ; They are not mine, but the words of the Apostle, with many more as severe as these : ‘ And ‘ from such (saith he to *Timothy* his own Son ‘ in the Faith) withdraw thy self, *v. 5.* Whatever any man would alledge or obtrude upon you, which is not consonant to the wholesome words of Christ and his Apostles, which make up the whole Doctrine according to Godliness, reject and disclaim it as alien from the Faith ; for unless ye can have new Scriptures, ye can never have new Articles of your Faith.

To these alone we appeal as the immoveable Rule of our Doctrines ; and if any doubt arise in the interpretation of them, we refer our selves gladly to the first and purest Antiquity : To Christ alone as the great Author and Finisher of our Faith ; to the Apostles and Evangelists, as the first Preachers and Publishers ; to the Primitive Fathers and Councils, as the best Helpers and Interpreters. Let no man therefore deceive you with vain words, nor beat you off from this hold and fortress ; whatever is necessary to eternal life, is fully contained in the holy Scriptures ; whatever is not there, can never be a part of the Christian Faith. I conclude this point with the words and appeal of the Prophet, which is back'd with an excellent reason, *Isai.* 8. 20. 'To the Law and to the Testimony ; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.

III. I should now proceed in the third place to observe the emphasis and force of the Particle *και*. *The Faith was delivered to the Saints, and that but once :* Which little word is of great weight, and carries with it sufficient matter to conclude and determine those that

that seek it, and to settle and secure those that hold it. But that which I chiefly designe; (since the time forbids me to enlarge upon it) is the *Immutability of this Faith*, which is the proper importance of the word *Once*.

That which Christ received of his Father, he communicated to his Apostles ; so he testifies himself, when he prayed for them, *Joh. 17. 8.* ‘ I have given them the words ‘ which thou gavest me , and they have received them : The same that they received of Christ, they delivered to the Saints. So *St. Peter* declares, *2 Pet. 1. 16.* ‘ We have ‘ not followed cunningly devised Fables , ‘ when we made known unto you the power ‘ and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but ‘ were eye-witnesses of his Majesty. Nay, *St. Paul* speaks of *his Gospel* and the *preaching of Jesus Christ*, as one and the same thing, *Rom. 16. 25.* which he there interprets once for all to be, ‘ The Revelation of the Mystery which was kept secret since the World ‘ began, but now is made manifest, and by ‘ the Scriptures of the Prophets, according to ‘ the commandment of the everlasting God, ‘ [mark that again, I pray !] made known ‘ to all Nations for the obedience of Faith.

Here

Here then we are sure of the whole immutable counsel of God for the Faith and Obedience of all Nations, which the succeeding Church is to preach and receive as from the beginning, not to enlarge or shorten, not to alter or corrupt by any mixtures or additions of their own devising : For though when Christ founded his Church, he made that indeed capable of a continual addition, even till the full period of his coming again to Judgment ; yet the foundation of Faith upon which he built it, is like himself, *the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever* ; it stands as a Rock, firm and unalterable, never to be changed by Man or Angel. For though ‘ We (says St. Paul, Gal. 1. 8.) or ‘ an Angel from Heaven, preach any other ‘ Gospel unto you, than that which we have ‘ preached unto you, let him be accursed. A dreadful sentence at first hearing ! but that we may not take it for a sudden transport, we have the same result from his second thoughts (v. 9.) ‘ As we said before, ‘ so say I now again, If any man preach any ‘ other Gospel unto you, than that ye have ‘ received, let him be accursed. And what need I say more ? If an Apostle or an Angel may

may not attempt a change in the Doctrine of the Gospel, under pain of a Curse, what shall be the doom of any other? If Christ knew the mind of his Father, and the Apostles his, what words can express the heinousness of that guilt, where men presume to make additions to it? I shall add but one Rule which may serve to establish us in this Faith against all sort of innovations, and 'tis that of *Tertullian's*, where he pleads Prescription for the Truth: *Id dominicum & verum quod prius traditum, id extraneum & falsum, quod posterius immixtum.* Whatever is truly a part of the Christian Doctrine, was once at first delivered; whatever bears any latter date, can never be a point of the true Faith.

IV. And now methinks the Application of the whole is so easie and obvious, that it makes it self: For if the Faith of the Gospel be so certain, and has been so fully evidenced and made known to us, if it be a Doctrine of so great and pretious importance, even the Doctrine that brings Salvation; A Doctrine that comes from God by his onely begotten Son, and shews us the onely way to him, on which the eternal welfare of our Souls

Souls depends, and without which we had still remained what we were before, children of wrath : Surely then 'tis worthy of our Christian Resolution and Zeal, not only to love and obey it from the heart, but to confess and maintain and propagate in the World with our earnest endeavours, and persevering diligence ; *Then* we cannot but see what reason we have, ' to stand fast in ' one Spirit, with one mind, striving together for the Faith of the Gospel, as St. Paul exhorts, *Phil. 1. 27.* or as St. Jude here in the Text, *To contend earnestly for it, as 'twas once delivered to the Saints.*

There is a Zeal (I know) in the World which tends to destroy what it seems to contend for, which is full of bitterness and wrath, and clamours, and evil speakings ; a Zeal that commonly rageth and is confident, because it proceeds from ignorance, and knows not whereon to bottom : There is a Zeal that sets on fire the course of Nature, and is set on fire of Hell ; nay, that would call for fire from Heaven to consume those that oppose it, such as once betray'd it self in two of the Disciples, before they well understood the Gospel-Spirit. But
(blessed

(blessed be God for his Grace) we have not so learned Christ; no, the Zeal which the true Faith requires, and works in all its sincere Followers, is founded on knowledge and a sound mind; it is innocent, and patient, and holy; it is always tempered with meekness, and guided by the wisdom that is from above; 'which is first pure, then Jam. 3. 17.
' peaceable, gentle, and easie to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without
' partiality, and without hypocrisie. Wherefore while we strive together for the Faith of the Gospel, let us strictly keep to the Laws, and walk by the Rules which the Gospel prescribes to us; always remembering that Apostolical Caution, *2 Tim. 2. 5.* 'If a
' man strive for Masteries, yet he is not crowned, except he strive lawfully.

As for you (my Brethren and Friends) whom I take to be grounded in this Faith, and long since stablished in the love of it, it is needless (I hope) to load you with Perswasions to stand for it, or indeed to continue and persevere in it: It is but the effect of that happy Education which your Parents at first bestowed upon you; and 'tis but

reasonable to expect that the Seed of God which was then sown in your hearts, should grow up daily to perfection, and bring forth suitable fruit: For any man to draw back or desert the ways of Religion, argues either ignorance of its grounds, or great vanity and lightness of mind; but for Us who are descended from the Tribe of *Levi*, and cannot be supposed to want instruction, to forsake, or waver, or even to doubt of our most Holy Faith, what is it else, but to cast the highest reflection upon the honour of Religion, to stain the care and piety of our Fathers, to reproach and vilifie that Doctrine which they so faithfully dispensed, and so effectually recommended to the World? Wherefore, 'Remember them who 'had the Rule over you, who have spoken 'unto you the Word of God; whose Faith 'follow, considering the end of their Conversation. Remember them (I say) who were your *Parents* and *Pastors* too, and be not back-sliding Children.

Heb. 13. 7.

And as the best means to maintain this Perseverance, let us all be most earnestly exhorted to joyn in an hearty Union and Compliance

pliance with the Doctrine, and Discipline, and Liturgy of this Excellent and Apostolical Church, whereof we are Members: A Church that comes nearest the Pattern in the Mount; to that I mean which began at *Jerusalem*, and went forth from *Sion*, which was once for all founded by our Lord, built up by his Apostles, and continued pure and uncorrupt in all the first and best Ages of Religion.

And seeing you are now dispersed and distributed into several Callings, and a great diversity of Conditions, howsoever God hath disposed of you, see that you carry the Reputation of your Family and Extraction along with you; let it appear by your walking in Christ, as you have received him, that the Principles of the Christian Religion have their efficacy in every Profession; shew that you have been taught from your infancy to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present World: so shall ye adorn the Gospel which your Fathers preached, and prove your sincerity in the Faith, so shall it be manifest to your selves and others, that ye do not rest merely

in any external Priviledges, but that you live over the Doctrines you profess, and practise the Truth which is after Godliness.

And because the great demonstration of your Faith is to be seen in your Works, especially the works of Mercy and Charity, Put on therefore (*as the Elect of God, holy, and beloved*) Bowels of mercies, kindness, and a benign temper of mind; and above all these things, put on Charity, which is the bond of perfectness, as the Apostle again exhorts, Col. 3. 12. You cannot want Objects to move your compassion, nor Motives to constrain it: Here is a large Field before you, of the Widows and the Fatherless, whose Relation and Birth must needs endear this duty to you: Some of their Widows are still alive, who suffered much for their constancy to the Faith, and their fidelity to the Crown (two inseparable Notes of a genuine Son of the Church of England) during the times of the Great Rebellion; and many are the Children that can scarce speak for themselves, who through the narrow Provision that is made for the CLERGY in
too

too many places of this Kingdom, bespeak your assistance by my mouth.

'Tis the command you know of the Apostle, ' That whilst ye have opportunity, ye Gal. 6. 10.
' should do good unto all men, but especially to them that are of the Household of
' Faith : What should be accounted the Household of Faith, rather than the Families of them that preach it ? And what opportunity can ye have of doing good, that exceeds this ?

And consider (I beseech you) *You* that are Rich among the Brotherhood, who it is that hath put such a difference between you and them ; was it purely your own Industry, or Parts, or Studies, that got you this Wealth ; or is it not rather the Blessing of God, who hath given you all things richly to enjoy ? What has any amongst you which he did not receive ? Now if you did receive it, look up to God your great Benefactor with thankful hearts, and look down upon the Widows and the Fatherless with Pity and Compassion.

Deposite

Deposite that Tribute which you owe unto God for their use, and what you leave with *the Stewards of the Feast* to day, let it be but an Earnest-Penny of what you designe for *the Treasurers of the Corporation* from time to time : Think it not enough to sprinkle a little now, but lay by something for them out of your constant Income ; and when you make Provision for your own Families, let *the Household of Faith* have some share and portion, even in your last Wills and Testaments.

Resolve to do it, before you go hence ; Vow it here in the Church before the Lord your God, from the ground of the heart, and make him some chearful and suitable acknowledgement for his distinguishing Providence towards you and yours : So shall the rest of your substance be blessed and increased, and the Prayers of the Destitute shall be heard in your behalf ; so shall your own Posterity thrive the better, nay, the Children of others, and the Generations to come shall call ye blessed, and your great reward is with the Lord ; for I am warranted to assure you, ' That God is not unrighteous to
' forget

‘ forget your work and labour of Love,
‘ which ye have shewed towards his Name, in
‘ that ye have ministred unto the Saints, and
‘ yet do minister.

‘ Now unto him that is able to keep you
‘ from falling, and to present you faultless be-
‘ fore the presence of his glory with excee- Jude 24. 25.
‘ ding joy,

‘ To the onely wise God our Saviour, be
‘ glory and majesty, dominion and power, now
‘ and ever. *Amen.*

FINIS.

*A true Report of the S U M S Distributed
for the Relief of the Widows and Children of
Clergy-men, in the Years 1684, 85, 86.*

By the Corporation.

	To 28 Sequestred Ministers	<i>l.</i>	<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>
	Widows	084	00	0
A. 1684	To 68 other Ministers Widows	101	10	0
	For Binding out Children Apprentices	100	00	0
		285	10	0
	To 34 Sequest. Ministers Wid.	099	00	0
A. 1685	To 98 other Ministers Widows	129	00	0
		228	00	0
	To 45 Sequest. Ministers Wid.	135	00	0
A. 1686	To 112 other Ministers Wid.	179	00	0
	For deceased Ministers Children	020	00	0
		334	00	0
		847	10	0

By the Stewards of the Feasts.

For Relief of poor Ministers	
Widows, and Binding out	
Children, for the said three	360 00 0
years, about	

Tot.---1207 10 0